

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Increase Maine's High School Graduation Rates

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 211, sub-c. 1-B is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER 1-B

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

§ 5031. High school graduation rate

It is the goal of the State to achieve an average statewide secondary school graduation rate of 90% by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The state board shall adopt rules specifying the methodology to be used to calculate secondary school graduation rates through 2016. Rules adopted under this section are major substantive rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A and must be provisionally adopted and submitted to the Legislature for review no later than January 14, 2011.

Sec. 2. Stakeholder group. The Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education shall collaboratively establish a stakeholder group to develop recommendations relating to increasing secondary school graduation rates in the State. The stakeholder group must include, but is not limited to, members of local school boards, secondary school principals and superintendents, secondary school teachers and guidance counselors, school attendance coordinators and other persons the commissioner and the board determine will contribute to the development of effective policies relating to increasing secondary school graduation rates. The stakeholder group shall report its recommendations to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by January 10, 2011. The report must include, but is not limited to, recommendations relating to:

1. The establishment of guidelines for school suspensions and expulsions;
2. The impact and implementation of zero-tolerance practices;
3. Determining best practices for secondary schools, families and youth for increasing secondary school graduation rates; and
4. Raising the maximum age of mandatory school attendance from 17 to 18 years of age.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the state goal of achieving an average statewide secondary school graduation rate of 90% by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. The State Board of Education is required to provisionally adopt major substantive rules specifying the methodology to be used to calculate secondary school graduation rates through 2016 and to submit those rules for legislative review by January 14, 2011.

The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education to establish a stakeholder group to develop recommendations relating to increasing secondary school graduation rates

in the State and to report its findings to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters by January 10, 2011.